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mere word opens an almost boundless field. Once in a while one chances across some of the ware of the famous Berlin factories. Some of the enamelled cups in hard paste are particularly fine. The factory was established in 1751, by William Wegeley. The mark distinguishing this ware is a (W), of which the middle lines sometimes cross.

During the occupation of Dresden by Frederick the Great, he transported from the Miessen factory, not only the materials, but workmen, clay and specimens to enrich his works in Berlin. There was a curious decree made by Frederick for the diffusing of his factories work, which forbade any Jew in his dominion to marry unless he had a voucher from the director of the factory, to the effect that he had bought a specified amount of porcelain, so that most of the old Jewish families of Berlin can show an almost matchless collection of old china and porcelain. The following mark on any china signifies it was made for the court (O). The factories of Niderveller, in the beginning of this century, were incorporated in the Sèvres works, the mark is a sort of flaming (N). The style purely empire.

In looking up Wedgwood it is well to know that the mark is substantially the same now as in the olden time, but it must be borne in mind that genuine specimens are often found without a mark, so that one must depend upon their own judgement in such instances. In all cases, except on porcelain, the mark is impressed in the paste without color. The most common mark is the word Wedgwood, generally in small capitals, or in old fashioned italic or script. Articles bearing the latter mark are surely old. The mark Wedgwood or Bentley, in small letters, in old italics, or in a circle, appear frequently in the genuine ware, but fraud is sometimes perpetrated with this mark. For those who are blessed of an abundance there is no more fascinating and delightful pastime, than the collecting of old china, but fortunately to-day for those whose means lie between excess and poverty, there is much that is truly as beautiful as some of the ancient ware, and a great deal less expensive.

I have said so much against plain white china, let me go back and admit that it has its mission. It is the ware of all wares that should be used in boarding houses, hotels, and in all public dining rooms, but in a friend's house we should be willing to take things on trust.

At one time white china was the best we could secure, so for past services let us be grateful; but it has had its day in which it reigned supreme and should now be willing to retire. I believe it was Clarence Cook, in his *House Beautiful*, who says, "If the serpent had offered Eve the apple on a white plate, the world would have been saved much trouble and misery."

THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.—From illustrated articles on ancient styles of furniture to advice about cheese-cloth curtains, from elaborate instruction in wood engraving to a paragraph about cleaning gilt frames, this admirable magazine contains innumerable things of interest to artists and amateurs and of use to housekeepers. The June number is especially attractive.—*N. Y. Mail and Express*, June 19.



Paper Knife in Wood or Metal.

A NOVELTY IN MURAL PAINTING.

IN the progress of mural and ceiling decoration otherwise than by means of paper hangings the preparation of plaster surfaces must receive greater attention in the future than it has in the past. On this point French practice is far ahead of our own. How much depends on the character of the surface on which painting is done for effectiveness as regards color is best known to painters themselves. There are indeed compositions for this purpose that wholly change the character of the painting. The method we are about to describe is one that has hitherto been held as a secret, though it is easy to perceive that in substance it is a revival of old practices, and it is not unlikely that it is followed by the Italians in their fresco painting for properly impregnating their colors with the cement, after which the work is polished apparently by friction, in the case of marbling presenting a beautiful and finished appearance quite different from the effect produced merely by paint and varnish. Travelers in Italy have tried to find out the precise process, but it has evaded them. It appears they have large charcoal fires and long flat irons but will not work while strangers are looking on. The method of introducing new effects and giving painting on plaster surfaces which we now for the first time explain, is so well adapted for our requirements as likely to come into large demand by architects and others. The painting will be given by it a soft, diaphanous and brilliant aspect. Eighteen ounces of gum arabic and two pints of cold spring water are to be put in a glazed vessel; when the gum is dissolved twenty-eight ounces of well cleansed and finely powdered gum mastic is to be stirred in, and the mixture placed over a slow fire. It is to be continually stirred and beaten. When sufficiently boiled it will no longer appear transparent, but become opaque and of a pasty consistence. As soon as this is the case, twenty ounces of white wax broken into small pieces are to be added without taking the now boiling composition off the fire, the ingredients being still stirred and beaten until the wax is thoroughly melted. After being taken off the fire the beating is continued, and whilst hot, not boiling, four pints of water are added. The composition if properly made will be like a cream, and the colors when mixed with it as smooth as when blended with oil. Such colors in powder as are used in painting with oil are mixed with the composition on an earthen palette so as to render the mixture of the usual consistency of oil colors. The brushes used to apply it are dipped in water, these brushes being the same as used in oil color. The colors before being mixed are ground dry, and in most cases it answers best if they are laid on thick. The composition may at any time be thinned by adding water. The colors blend without difficulty and even when dry the colors may easily be united by means of a brush dipped in water. When the painting is finished some white wax is put into a glazed earthen vessel over a slow fire, and when melting, but not boiling, this wax is applied with a hard brush to cover the painting. When this wax coat is cold, a moderately hot iron, such as will not hiss if touched with a damp cloth, is drawn lightly over the wax. Until the wax is perfectly cold the painting will appear as if under a cloud. If the painting is not then quite clear, a red hot iron is to be held before it. The oftener the heat is applied the greater will be the transparency and brilliancy of the coloring; too great a heat will not only draw the wax too much to the surface but crack the paint. Any uneven part is to be thus operated on. Any bubbles will disappear on drawing the heated surface of a piece of smooth baked clay over them. The painting is then to be rubbed with a fine linen cloth. Canvass or wood may be similarly painted on. If on wood, pieces of wood should be previously let in at back across the grain to prevent the warping.

IMITATION OF MAHOGANY.

HOW much in economy is compassed and lightness of furniture secured by imitation of the valuable hardwoods?

French artisans specially excel in imitating mahogany, ebony and satin-wood. So nearly do they contrive to render any species of wood of close grain like mahogany in texture, density of hue and polish, that many expert judges will often mistake the imitation for the natural wood. The following is the mode: The surface having been planed and rendered perfectly smooth, the wood is rubbed with diluted nitrous acid, which prepares it for the materials subsequently applied. Afterwards to a filtered mixture of one ounce and a half of dragon's blood dissolved in a pint of spirits of wine is added one-third that quantity of carbonate of soda. The whole constituting a very thin liquid is brushed with a soft brush over the wood. This process is repeated with very little alteration, and in a short interval of time the wood assumes the external appearance of mahogany. If the composition has been properly made the surface will resemble an artificial mirror and should this brilliancy ever decline it may be restored by rubbing the surface with a little cold drawn linseed oil.